Wrist Conditioning

by **Coach Sommer** on Sat Feb 02, 2008 2:44 pm

Wrist Conditioning

There are entire series of movements that I use with my athletes for wrist conditioning in one combination or another on a DAILY basis. Some involve dumbbell work, some involve work hanging from a single bar and some are pushup variations. All of the various movements are detailed in the my upcoming book Liquid Steel, however I will introduce you to two of the pushup variations that I use with my athletes.
Wrist pushups - Get into a pushup support position on your fists with your hands turned sideways. As you lower into the pushup, allow the wrists to bend outward and your bodyweight to descend upon the back of your wrists and hands. As you ascend out of the pushup, straighten the wrists simultaneously along with the elbows returning back up onto your fist.
If you find these too strenuous at first, do not be at all ashamed to perform these from your knees initially.
First knuckle - Get into a flat handed pushup position with your fingers pointing directly forward. Descend into a regular pushup, as you ascend push up onto the first knuckles on your hands as your straighten your elbows. The elevation up onto the first knuckles will result in your fingers remaining flat on the ground and the rest of your hand being elevated up off of it. Remain elevated on the knuckles during the top of the movement and then once again go back to a flat hand during the descent.
I prefer sets of ten with these movements, although occasionally I will have my athletes perform sets of up to fifty. For some reason they do not seem to like me as much on those days .

Yours in Fitness,
Coach Sommer

by **StevenJ** on Fri Jun 13, 2008 11:30 pm

Lately I have been experiencing some wrist pain in my right wrist, it's fine most of the time, but when I do handstands and sometimes frog stands it hurts pretty badly. I've been doing these conditioning exercises, but I don't fully understand the fist push-up. When I do them, I feel enormous amounts of strain on my elbows, is this normal or am I doing something incorrectly? The first knuckle push-up is intense though, I can feel my wrists burn performing them on my knees.

by **Coach Sommer** on Sat Jun 14, 2008 2:43 am

As well as performing them from the knees, the intensity of wrist pushups can be still further reduced by piking the hips and pressing the glutes backward during the descent of the movement. The more you pike, the greater the reduction in intensity.
It sounds as though you are attempting to maintain your frog stands and handstands longer than your wrist is comfortable accommodating. Experiment with reducing your hold times to find if there is a window where the pain is alleviated. If such a window does not exist, you will need to increase your basic strength prior to re-engaging in your frog stand and handstand work.

Yours in Fitness,
Coach Sommer

by **Coach Sommer** on Sun Aug 31, 2008 6:25 am

I have a wrist series that I perform with my athletes every single day. This is essential; the only time I have ever had wrist issues with gymnasts was one time when I strayed from this habit. The following **essay and video** will help to get you started.

Yours in Fitness,
Coach Sommer

Wrist Pushups

WRIST PUSHUPS

The video of the wrist series that Blairbob filmed at a Future Stars Clinic is actually my own wrist series; or at least the floor work portion of it. I guess that I should not find this surprising as I have been involved with the Future Stars program for over ten years and have introduced the series to a great many people. That being said, and as others have already observed, there are a number of issues present with the performance of the movements as shown by those inexperienced athletes.
For the gymnastics strength trainee the wrist series, and in particular the wrist pushups, are essential elements that must be included in their training on a nearly daily basis. My own athletes perform the entire series every day in warm-up (10 strict reps per variation) and then once again at half volume on pommel horse days upon the completion of that event.

The video clip above is a demonstration of correctly performed wrist pushups.

Initially most people will find full wrist pushups too difficult to perform. I highly recommend that beginners to this movement begin from their knees. If this fails to sufficiently scale back the movement, then add additional piking in the hips until you reach a comfortable level of intensity during the wrist pushups.

As you become more proficient, intensity may be increased in several ways:
1) Decrease the speed of both the flexion and straightening of the wrist. Many people will confuse slowing down the speed of bending the elbow with that of the wrist; this is incorrect. It is the bending of the wrist itself that concerns us here.

2) Reduce the degree of elbow bend used during the wrist pushups. This gradual reduction can continue until the elbows are completely straight.

3) Elevate the body by placing the feet on the wall. A note of caution is however due here; do not attempt to continue to increase your height on the wall at every workout. Rather pick an acceptable height that is initially challenging and then remain there for at least six weeks prior to once again increasing the height. The body must have time to progress through the adaptive phases of over-load, load and under-load to avoid potential overuse injuries.

4) Supremely gifted athletes may also perform this series while being spotted in a handstand.

Yours in Fitness,
Coach Sommer